

TRUE & FALSE EQUALITY

One of the slogans of our age, immersed as it is in a clutch of simplistic philosophies, is this—

All men are equal

but one might reasonably put in opposition to it another, and apparently contrary, slogan—

All men are unequal

Which one is true ? Both are true when appropriate distinctions are applied.

How do we go about making the distinctions ? First, we must have a right understanding of what man is—and what man is not. And one can only do that through sound philosophy, philosophy which accords with common sense, the philosophy enunciated 2,400 years ago by Aristotle with the refinements of the prince of Catholic philosophers, St Thomas Aquinas.

Aristotle is, perhaps, the most original thinker the world has ever known. A recent writer, historian H J A Sire, has well said of him :

“All other thinkers [began] with a theory and sought to fit reality into it ; Aristotle is the only philosopher to have begun with reality and devised a system by which to understand it.”

(Phoenix from the Ashes, Kettering Ohio, 2015)

What, then, is man ? He is *the rational animal*, the one member of the animal kingdom equipped with intellect, the faculty, as Aristotle remarks, which enables him to become all things. Alone among the material creatures in the universe does man exist for his own sake for, unlike the others, he is possessed of an immaterial soul, a soul which cannot be destroyed. Whatever may befall his body—corruption, death—his soul will endure. And, since it is the soul, the *formal principle*, and not the body that makes a man be what he is, he cannot die. Thus man is an end in himself—never a means, always an end.

So does philosophy serve to confirm the revelation in *Genesis* that God made man in his own image and likeness.

Men are equal

It is in this characteristic, in the possession of an immortal soul, that a man is equal with his fellows—whether healthy or sickly ; strong or weak ; bright or dull. No man may be sacrificed or killed for the sake of another or others. Each is indelibly entitled to be accorded the rights that attach to him as man. This is the ground for condemnation of the evils of abortion, euthanasia and contraception.

Men are unequal

Yet it is true to say that men are unequal. For it is patent that they have diverse talents and abilities. Some men are possessed of great powers of intellect or of will, or both. Others, the majority, have average talents and abilities. But even among the average one may find gifts by which a man enriches his fellows and society as a whole in fields such as mimicry, art, music, poetry, mathematics, philosophy. There is much more variation among men than there is among any of the various species of brute animals. One man differs from another much more than one horse differs from another, or than one dog differs from another.

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The catchcry of those infected with feminist ideology is—

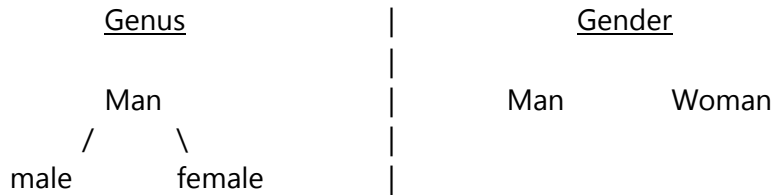
Men and women are equal

The slogan contains a truth, but it contains an untruth as well. For common sense teaches us that, equally, one may claim with justification—

Men and women are unequal

Which is true ? Again, both statements are true, provided we make the appropriate distinctions.

The first distinction is that between genus and gender.



Men and women are equal in being members of the genus *Man*. It is to the *genus* that the author of the Book of *Genesis* refers when he says : “God made man in His own image and likeness... male and female he created them.” (*Genesis* 1 : 27) How are men and women unequal ? In their differing ordinations and in the rights and duties that attach to their differing vocations. The equality between them is not, then, a simple equality but something analogous.

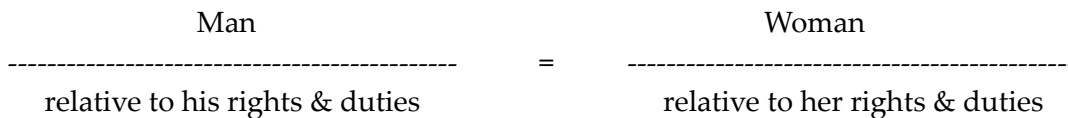
An illustration will assist. We may say $A = B$, such as we might say—

$$9 = 9$$

and in doing so we indicate a *simple* equality. But equally we may say $A = B$ signifying this—

$$\frac{3}{9} = \frac{27}{81}$$

and then we are indicating not a simple but a *proportional* equality, for 3 is to 9 as 27 is to 81. And so, as between the two, the equality is a proportional equality.



Almighty God made woman as man's helpmate. It is revealed in the line in *Genesis* (2 : 18) that we all take for granted : “Let us make for him a helper like to himself.” God reveals woman's ordination and her vocation.

Note carefully, God did not make the function mutual, as if one could say “God made man to be woman's helper”. This is not to say that a man may abuse a woman's services or that he does not have

duties towards her, or that a man not have duties towards his wife. He has profound duties towards her as may be seen in Chapter 5 of St Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians.

God's revelation in *Genesis* explains how a woman's focus varies from that of a man. While he is focused on *things*, her focus is the more noble one of *persons*, on man taken generically (i.e., male and female). It explains, too, how a woman generally achieves her ends, not directly as a man does, but *indirectly* through others, through *the persons* that are her focus—on her children, her husband, her brothers, her sisters. She rejoices in their achievements and aids them in their work in accordance with her vocation.

Which is not to deny that there are exceptions. There have been women like Isabelle Autissier who sailed in long distance races (around the world)—and was better at it than most of the men. There have been women like the Spanish rockclimber Araceli Segarra who climbed Mt Everest in 1996. There have been women pilots such as Christine Davy of Goulburn, New South Wales, the first Australian woman to be a check-captain in an airliner. But the average woman does not consider living alone for three months in a sailing boat, or climbing Mt Everest, or flying airliners, as her vocation.



Isabelle Autissier

Men and women have different talents to match their different ordinations. There are things that a man can do that a woman cannot. But there are things a woman can do that a man cannot.

Women can know by connaturality, a facility in which, generally, men do not share. Something similar occurs with brute animals. Ants, for instance, (if the ladies will pardon me!) know in advance when rain is on the way and manifest their knowledge by a furious activity to prepare their nest. It is well recognised, too, that animals manifest in behaviour their anticipation of seismic activity. There are other instances. The cuckoo hatched in the nest of its foster-parents returns to the home of its parents far-distant from the place of its birth without the teaching of its parents which abandon it after hatching. Sea turtles return over 1,000s of miles to the beach where they were born to hatch their own eggs. Brute animals do not have intellect. So how do they know what to do, where to go? The knowledge is implanted in them by their Author. They have these knowledges connaturally.

Women are, in a sense, the better part of mankind which is why men cosset our sisters, our wives, our mothers, and protect them from such harm. The downside is that, while it is evil for a man to

embrace what is bad, it is worse for a woman ; for a man to be drunk is an evil but it is worse for a woman to be so. *Corruptio optimi pessima*—the corruption of the best is the worst.
